



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RINGLEADER IN PRESCRIPTION FORGERY RING PLEADS GUILTY FOR FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINING OVER 27,000 PILLS

TUCSON, Ariz. – Titis Tyrone Shack, 40, pleaded guilty here yesterday to five felony charges in connection with leading a prescription forgery ring in order to obtain more than 27,000 pills, mostly Percocet and Oxycodone which are both Schedule II narcotic pain-killers. From June 2002 through November 2005, the drugs were obtained from 51 Tucson area pharmacies using forged signatures of at least five Tucson area physicians on more than 175 fraudulent prescriptions.

Shack pleaded guilty to one count each of Conspiracy; Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance; Possession of a Controlled Substance by Misrepresentation, Fraud, Forgery, Deception and Subterfuge; Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents and Information; and Health Care Fraud. The forged prescriptions, along with the purported signatures, also sometimes contained the identification number assigned to the physician by DEA. This DEA number permits authorized physicians to legally prescribe medications. Shack admitted in court that as part of the conspiracy, defendants used prescription pads stolen from the Tucson physicians. The defendants also committed health care fraud by presenting the forged prescriptions to obtain insurance co-payments for the drugs.

Shack was arrested on Friday, December 2, 2005, along with three other defendants: Don Durand Harper, 38; Kimberly Anne Thompson, aka Kimberly Brown, 36; and Michele Nicole Holloman, age 31, all of Tucson. These four were indicted for conspiracy on December 7, 2005. On January 18, 2006, these four defendants and two others, Farrah L. Newton and Christina Torres-Meza, both of Tucson, AZ, were named in a 125-count Superseding Indictment, charging Conspiracy; Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance; Possession of a Controlled Substance by Misrepresentation, Fraud, Forgery, Deception and Subterfuge; Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents and Information and Health Care Fraud. The trial for the remaining defendants is set for April 11, 2006.

A conviction for Conspiracy carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of \$1,000,000 or both. A conviction for Possession of a Controlled Substance by Misrepresentation, Fraud, Forgery, Deception and Subterfuge carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 or both. A conviction for Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents and Information carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of \$1,000,000 or both. A conviction for Health Care Fraud carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 or both.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by DEA and the FBI. The prosecution is being handled by Danny N. Roetzel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR 05-02283-TUC-JMR (JM)
RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-040(Shack)

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